

Paraklēsis: Balance

I wonder what you first think of when you hear the word “balance.” I am guessing it depends on your context. A different image might come to mind if you are in chemistry class, or driving on the highway and your steering wheel is shaking, or you are paying bills, or maybe you are scrambling to meet a deadline at work and wishing you could be at your child’s baseball game. Have you ever done yoga?

Well, you probably can guess that, in this letter, I won’t be talking about weighing compounds in a lab or balancing your tires to smooth your ride. Or yoga. But that struggle I have had at times, to abandon my work and be with my family... that is something that is relevant here. I will go out on a limb here and suggest that **we all desire a balance in life**. I think it is interesting that the word balance comes from the Latin word “bilanx”: “bi” (two) and “lanx” (plates) yet in our modern desire for “life balance” we would need a lot more than two plates! Picture a circle of plates all connected by spokes. At the center where the spokes meet, the wheel of plates is resting on a pole. Even with the plates empty, you can imagine this being hard to balance. Now start loading on the things in life that need balance: God, family, work, fun, diet, exercise, sleep... **Put too much of one thing and the whole thing crashes.**

Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. (Philippians 4:5) (KJV)

Wait, did I start that list with “God?” Does God have a place on the balance of life? Can there be too much of Him? Is He capable of “tipping the scales” – and if so, wouldn’t that be a good thing?

So, that’s what we will explore here... I’ll put a barely adequate summary statement here, in case you need to bail out of reading this early. **Your efforts to balance life is a waste of time, like striving after the wind. Don’t even try.**

“But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. (Matthew 6:33)

So, I asked a trick question, didn’t I? Did you catch it? Is God capable of tipping the scales and crashing our “multi-plate” balance? That depends... What do you mean by “God?” Surely you and I both rushed to say, “No way! One can never have too much God!” This is true, but one could physically study the Bible too much, or focus on prophecy and current events too much, or stand on the street with a sign warning of the end of the world... too much.

You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on your guard so that you are not carried away by the error of unprincipled men and fall from your own steadfastness, (2 Peter 3:17)

This “unprincipled man” whose error “carries me away” causing my scale to crash, could very easily be me. But this is not a revelation. This is not big news or a surprise to us. We have heard our whole life long “everything in moderation.” I think it is repeated so often because it is not in our nature to self-moderate. We are creatures of excess and increase. Isn’t that why **our society measures success via economic growth**? If it doesn’t grow, it isn’t good, regardless of how much abundance we have.

Have you found honey? Eat only what you need, That you not have it in excess and vomit it. (Proverbs 25:16)

The following scripture is a balance that God created for us. But, according to all human logic it should easily topple:

God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day. By the seventh day God completed His work which He had done, and

He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made. (Genesis 1:31 thru 2:2-3)

Six days on one side and one day on the other, and they create a **perfect balance**. Awesome.

But, let's go back to our life balance with many plates... God should be on that list. He had better be, or there will be no possibility of balance. Messiah gave us an example of this when the sisters, Mary and Martha had Him over for lunch one day... Martha complained that Mary was not pulling her weight with the serving duties and was instead sitting at the feet of our Savior, **listening to His words**.

*But the Lord answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about so many things; but only one thing is necessary, for **Mary has chosen the good part**, which shall not be taken away from her." (Luke 10:41-42)*

So, here is one **key to balance: Choose the good part**. God most certainly has a place on that wheel of plates. Yes, balance the time you have for study, prayer, meditation with the time you spend working, and loving your family, and having fun and exercising, etc... But, as I said above, **one can never have too much God!** That is, God Himself. He will not tip the balance, ever. God is Love. God is Light. Those things are infinite and boundless. They do not tip the balance, they only stabilize it. Pile on the Love and your life gets more balanced. Pile on the Light and your life gets more balanced.

The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love. (1 John 4:8)

This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. (1 John 1:5)

I am thinking that **God's Love and Light are like outriggers for your canoe**. When the surf gets rough, a canoe is **not** the best vessel to be piloting. Outriggers make that task manageable and balanced. Consider that verse I quoted above, 2Peter3:17. We are striving to not fall from our steadfastness – does that sound like building your house on the solid rock compared to a foundation of sand?

"Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock. "And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded on the rock. "Everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not act on them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. "The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and it fell—and great was its fall." (Matthew 7:24-27)

Love defies gravity and provides stability in all things. This, of course, sounds metaphorical, but there is a real, tangible, physical application to this statement that I think we would do well to explore and employ every day in our lives. When you exhibit love toward others in your walk, notice the peace that enters your conscience. Notice how life feels balanced when you experience this peace.

Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. (Colossians 3:2)

Peace to you and glory to God!

-Nate

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